

# Community Services

## Budget Message

FY 2003/04 and 2004/05

Promoting teamwork throughout the department in partnership with State and local health, social service, and criminal justice agencies is an essential focus of the **Community Services Department**. The Department ensures high quality customer service through community based programs that offer both information and direct client assistance.

The Seminole County **Probation Division** consists of adult misdemeanor probation, pretrial diversion, pretrial release (mental health), community service and conditional release. We supervise over 5,000 offenders with the focus on affecting positive behavior for the purpose of reducing crime and recidivism. In FY 2001/2002 our objective generated \$1,245,000 in revenues to the General Fund and 89,731 hours of community service work for our community. This year we formed a partnership with the Seminole County Sheriff's Office to operate a new program whereby the Courts allow eligible offenders to be tracked electronically by means of a Global Positioning Satellite (GPS). We will continue our protective role through professional monitoring of offenders in the community while they attempt to reintegrate back into productive law-abiding members of society or face the more serious consequence of incarceration.

**Prosecution Alternatives for Youth (PAY)** provides pretrial services by involving the community in juvenile justice. Over 300 adult and youth volunteers assist staff in promoting positive behavior, and holding young offenders accountable for their actions. PAY is taking a proactive approach to case supervision by conducting frequent home and field visits. This initiative was augmented in FY 2002/03 by the use of wireless laptop computers linked to a tracking system shared by all county law enforcement agencies, an effort that will provide "real time" offender information to all supervising/ monitoring entities. PAY provided diversion services to more than 1,000 juveniles in FY 2001/02, while maintaining a less than 12% recidivism rate, resulting in a savings of over \$800,000 in court costs. P.A.Y. is also providing case management services for the Juvenile Drug Court program which began in 2002.

The **Veteran Services Office** is increasing its outreach and publicizing efforts to support public awareness of the ever broadening VA benefits in addition to providing support to the Sanford VA Community Based Out-Patient Clinic and the Casselberry Veteran Services Office. Through staff education and training, Veterans Services strives to secure the maximum VA benefits for all eligible Seminole County citizens.

The **Division of Community Assistance** provides a "life line" during a time of crisis to approximately 15,000 residents. It is our hope and goal that our services will promote a sense of hope by restoring individual self-sufficiency, and strengthen the overall quality of life for the entire community. These positive outcomes are the result of coordinating access to resources through direct temporary financial assistance provided by our staff, or through referral to other community agencies more suitable to the needs of the client. The division also monitors the County's Community Partnership Grant Program that provides resources to local non-profit agencies. An intern program has been implemented that allows local students to work within the social service field as a component of their educational experience, and also provides an avenue for research to ensure efficient utilization of all resources and effective delivery of services to meet the needs of our residents.

The **Seminole County Health Department** provides services to promote and protect the health and safety of our community. Services offered include childhood immunizations, flu and pneumonia shots, pediatric, dental and maternity care for low-income residents, school physicals, birth and death certificates, prevention, screening and treatment for TB, STD, and HIV/AIDS, epidemiology, tobacco prevention, environmental health inspections and permitting, foreign travel shots, the WIC and Healthy Start services. The public health bioterrorism preparedness response system continues to be enhanced through community planning, partnerships and participation in the Regional Domestic Security Task Force. Through the Operation Vaccinate Florida program, smallpox vaccines are provided for health care providers and emergency first responders.